

Message Text

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EXDIS, TOSEC 812

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJECT: INR ASSESSMENT OF ECEVIT'S POSITION IN TURKEY

1. ECEVIT HAS LOST MUCH OF THE IMPRESSIVE GAIN IN PUBLIC
ESTEEM HE ACHIEVED DURING THE 1973 ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND
THE INTERVENTION IN CYPRUS LAST SUMMER.

2. ECEVIT MAY BE HURT BY HIS INABILITY TO FORESTALL THE
THREAT OF AN AID CUTOFF BY THE US.

--(A) THE TURKISH MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS CONCERNED OVER
THE EFFECTS SHOULD LONG-ESTABLISHED SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS BE
DISRUPTED.

--(B) THE POSSIBILITY OF AID SUSPENSION IS LIKEWISE UNSET-
TLING TO THE STILL LARGE BODY OF PUBLIC OPINION THAT SEES
CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE US AS THE CORNERSTONE OF TURKISH
SECURITY.

3. ECEVIT IS ALSO HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR MISHANDLING THE
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DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION.

--(A) HIS DECISION TO END THE COALITION GOVERNMENT IN HOPES OF SECURING EARLY ELECTIONS HAS PLUNGED TURKEY INTO A PROTRACTED POLITICAL CRISIS.

--(B) HE IS ALSO WIDELY BLAMED FOR EXCESSIVE POLITICAL AMBITION--SEEKING TO TURN THE NATIONAL SUCCESS ON CYPRUS INTO PERSONAL PARTISAN ADVANTAGE WHILE THE CYPRUS PROBLEM REMAINS AT A CRITICAL PHASE.

4. ECEVIT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE MATTERS HAS RAISED SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS POLITICAL SKILL, LEADERSHIP ABILITY, AND THE ROLE HE CAN PLAY IN RESOLVING TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS:

--(A) CONCERN NOT TO RISK FURTHER LOSS OF POPULAR APPROVAL AND NOT TO ALIENATE THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WILL LIMIT ECEVIT'S FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH THE CYPRUS ISSUE. IT WILL MAKE HIM MORE INSISTENT ON EXTRACTING GREEK GESTURES IN RETURN FOR GESTURES HE MIGHT OFFER ATHENS. IN SHORT, THESE CONSIDERATIONS ARE LIKELY TO CAUSE ECEVIT TO BE LESS MODERATE AND RATIONAL IN HIS APPROACH TO THE GREEKS.

--(B) ECEVIT'S ABILITY TO COMMIT TURKEY TO A SETTLEMENT WILL BE LIMITED. HIS LOSS OF POPULAR STANDING REDUCES THE INCLINATION OF OTHER POLITICAL FORMATIONS TO AGREE TO CONCESSIONS THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT IN MOVING TOWARD A SOLUTION ON THE ISLAND.

5. THESE DIFFICULTIES WILL NOT END SOON. ECEVIT'S EFFORTS TO FORM A NEW COALITION ARE STILL STALEMATED. THE DIFFICULTIES IN CONCERTING ALL THE VARIOUS POLITICAL FACTIONS MAKE A GOVERNMENT EXCLUDING ECEVIT'S PARTY UNLIKELY. THIS MAY LEAVE ECEVIT IN OFFICE AS HEAD OF A CARETAKER REGIME FOR SOME TIME, INASMUCH AS THE OTHER PARTIES ARE STILL RELUCTANT TO AGREE TO EARLY ELECTIONS.

6. BUT EVEN ADVANCING ELECTIONS FROM THEIR NORMAL FALL 1977 DATE TO THE SPRING OF 1975 DOES NOT OFFER A GOOD PROSPECT OF ASSURING THE FORMATION OF A STRONG, DECISIVE

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GOVERNMENT.

--(A) ECEVIT'S FALTERING POLITICAL HAND HAS REDUCED HIS CHANCES FOR SCORING THE IMPRESSIVE GAINS NECESSARY TO TURN HIS PREVIOUS 32 PERCENT OF THE VOTE INTO A MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT.

--(B) THE PERFORMANCE OF THE OTHER PARTIES HAS LIKEWISE

GAINED THEM LITTLE CREDIT, ESPECIALLY THEIR UNWILLINGNESS
TO COMPROMISE WITH EACH OTHER OR WITH ECEVIT.

--(C) EARLY ELECTIONS THUS DO NOT SEEM LIKELY TO CHANGE
THE PRESENT WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY SEATS
AMONG THE VARIOUS PARTIES. INGERSOLL

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